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Foreign Operations Machinery Mended

If there is any one segment of our federal government that has sorely needed proper organization and coordinated direction, it is that large and cumbersome machinery that is supposed to run our foreign policy operations.

For several years Washington's Sen. Henry M. Jackson has headed Senate committees which have been probing into those jungles of bureaucracy which have entangled and damaged our foreign policy machinery and restricted the firepower of American influence abroad.

Through extensive hearings and the issuance of public reports the Jackson subcommittee on national security policy and operations has been trying to untangle the weeds, blast out the roadblocks and force the construction of new highways and modern equipment to accommodate foreign policy needs.

In spite of the evidence which the Jackson staff assembled and the polite warnings issued even prior to the advent of the Kennedy administration, the executive department of the government has paid little attention to its rusting machinery and often inept operators.

The outmoded equipment and the overlapping authorities in the organization of the Department of State and the many other affiliated or independent agencies have retarded the kind of smooth and effective operations which America has needed.

While numerous foreign crises have arisen

and numerous good men have tried to meet them, the foreign policy machinery has been expanded and made more complicated—and has received only an occasional oiling through the Kennedy years and well into the Johnson administration.

President Johnson himself has contributed to the delinquency by dispatching special White House messengers abroad. They have exercised authority, instituted new overnight policies and made far-reaching promises with little or no consultation with ambassadors and career foreign service officers. The Johnson zeal for dramatics and political expediency has not helped to create stability, credibility and confidence.

In the meantime, the general public has become less reliably informed and more confused over foreign policy operations. And in the meantime, also, the costs of operation have continually mounted.

It is therefore with some ray of hope that many citizens—and no doubt Sen. Jackson himself—have now learned that some of the machinery is going to be patched up and mended.

Finally, by presidential order, the Secretary of State has been handed responsibility for the direction of his own department and, so far as present laws allow, the direction of associated governmental organizations such as the Central Intelligence Agency, the foreign aid programs, the U.S. Information Agency and most non-military activities abroad of the Defense Department.

This may mean a long overdue repairing of our foreign policy machinery. But the job cannot be done overnight and it will need the watching of the Senate committee.

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